



(12) **United States Patent**
Fisher et al.

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 9,476,725 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent:** **Oct. 25, 2016**

(54) **ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING
NETWORK SERVICES**

USPC 701/117
See application file for complete search history.

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this
patent is extended or adjusted under 35
U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

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(21) Appl. No.: **14/594,923**

(22) Filed: **Jan. 12, 2015**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2015/0127248 A1 May 7, 2015

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Related U.S. Application Data

(62) Division of application No. 13/736,805, filed on Jan.
8, 2013, now Pat. No. 8,965,669.

(60) Provisional application No. 61/584,688, filed on Jan.
9, 2012.

(51) **Int. Cl.**

G01C 21/34 (2006.01)
B60L 11/18 (2006.01)
G06Q 10/04 (2012.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC **G01C 21/3469** (2013.01); **B60L 11/1838**
(2013.01); **B60L 11/1861** (2013.01);
(Continued)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC G01C 21/3469; G01C 21/3492; G01C
21/3415; G01C 21/3484; G06Q 10/047;
B60L 11/1838; B60L 11/1861; B60L
2240/72; B60L 2230/40; B60L 2240/70;
Y02T 90/121; Y02T 10/7291; Y02T 90/14;
Y02T 10/705; Y02T 90/128; Y02T 90/163;
Y02T 90/16; Y02T 10/7044; Y02T 10/7088;
Y02T 10/7005

Primary Examiner — Brian P Sweeney

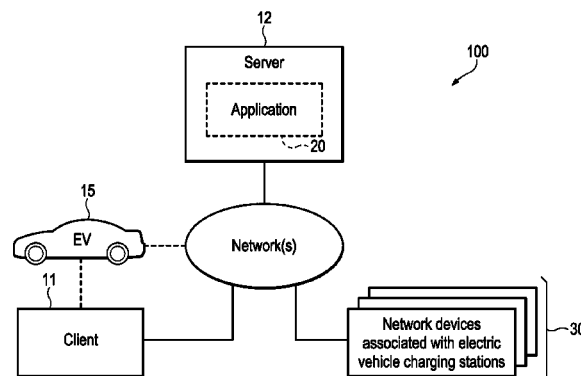
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Wyatt P.C.

(57)

ABSTRACT

To provide remote services, including dynamic, interactive assistance to electric vehicle (EV) users, a central server is arranged for electronic communications with EVs (15) and with client devices (11). The server also communicates with at least one EV charging station network, which in turn communicate with individual charging stations (30). Remote services may include trip planning, locating charging stations, checking availability and suitability of charging stations, making reservations at charging stations, and updating plans en route. The server collects data from the EV and analyzes the data to determine various statistics. The system advises a user on readiness of the EV to complete a proposed trip before recharging the EV batteries. Client devices may include smart phones, computers, or a head unit in the EV. Application software programs are executable on the client devices to provide user interfaces for accessing the remote services and for communicating with the central server.

25 Claims, 28 Drawing Sheets



(52) U.S. Cl.

CPC *G01C21/3415* (2013.01); *G01C 21/3484*
(2013.01); *G01C 21/3492* (2013.01); *G06Q*
10/047 (2013.01); *B60L 2230/40* (2013.01);
B60L 2240/70 (2013.01); *B60L 2240/72*
(2013.01); *Y02T 10/705* (2013.01); *Y02T*
10/7005 (2013.01); *Y02T 10/7044* (2013.01);
Y02T 10/7088 (2013.01); *Y02T 10/7291*
(2013.01); *Y02T 90/121* (2013.01); *Y02T*
90/128 (2013.01); *Y02T 90/14* (2013.01); *Y02T*
90/16 (2013.01); *Y02T 90/163* (2013.01)

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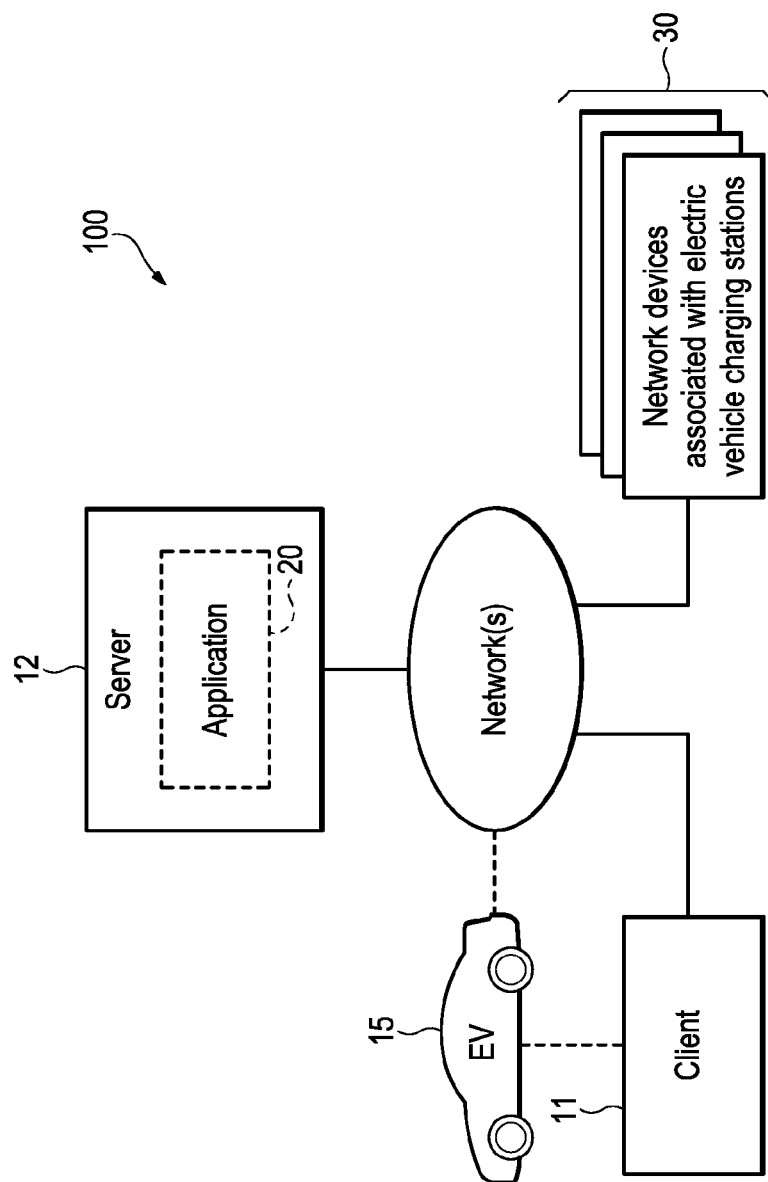



FIG. 1


Airbiquity

☒ Remember me

FIG. 2

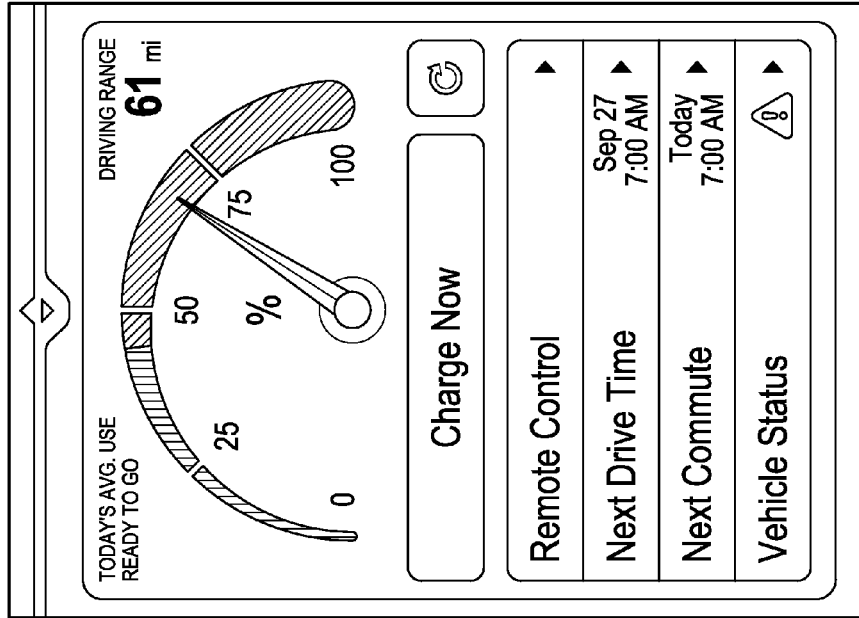


FIG. 3

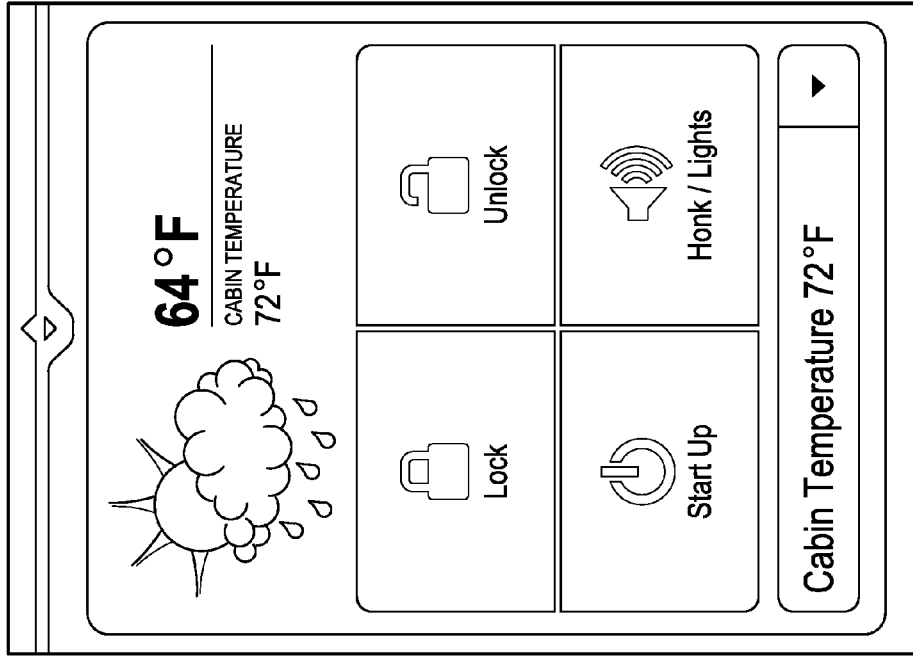


FIG. 5

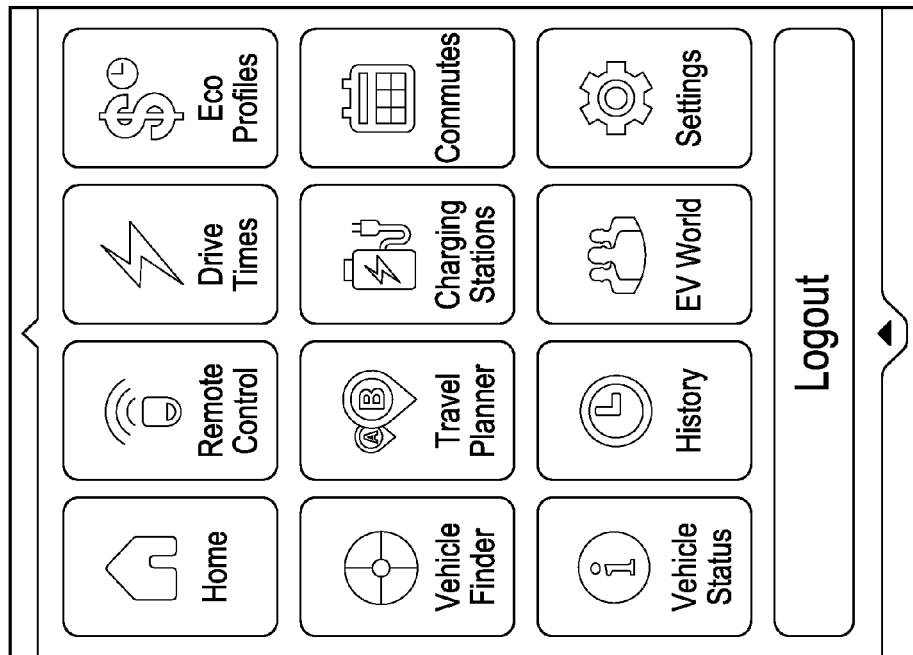


FIG. 4

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Weekdays 7:00 AM Cabin: 76°F, Heated Seats	>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tuesdays 8:00 PM Cabin: 72°F	>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fridays 8:00 PM Cabin: 72°F	>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Saturdays 11:30 PM Cabin: 72°F	>
Add New Drive Time		

FIG. 7

FIG. 6

8

▼

00

▼

AM

▼

Pre-Conditioning

Cabin Temperature 72°F

▼

☒

Pre-Heat Seats

Active for

☒

Monday

☒

Tuesday

☒

Wednesday

FIG. 8

☒

Pre-Heat Seats

☒

Active for

☒

Monday

☒

Tuesday

☒

Wednesday

☒

Thursday

☒

Friday

☒

Saturday

☒

Sunday

Done

FIG. 9

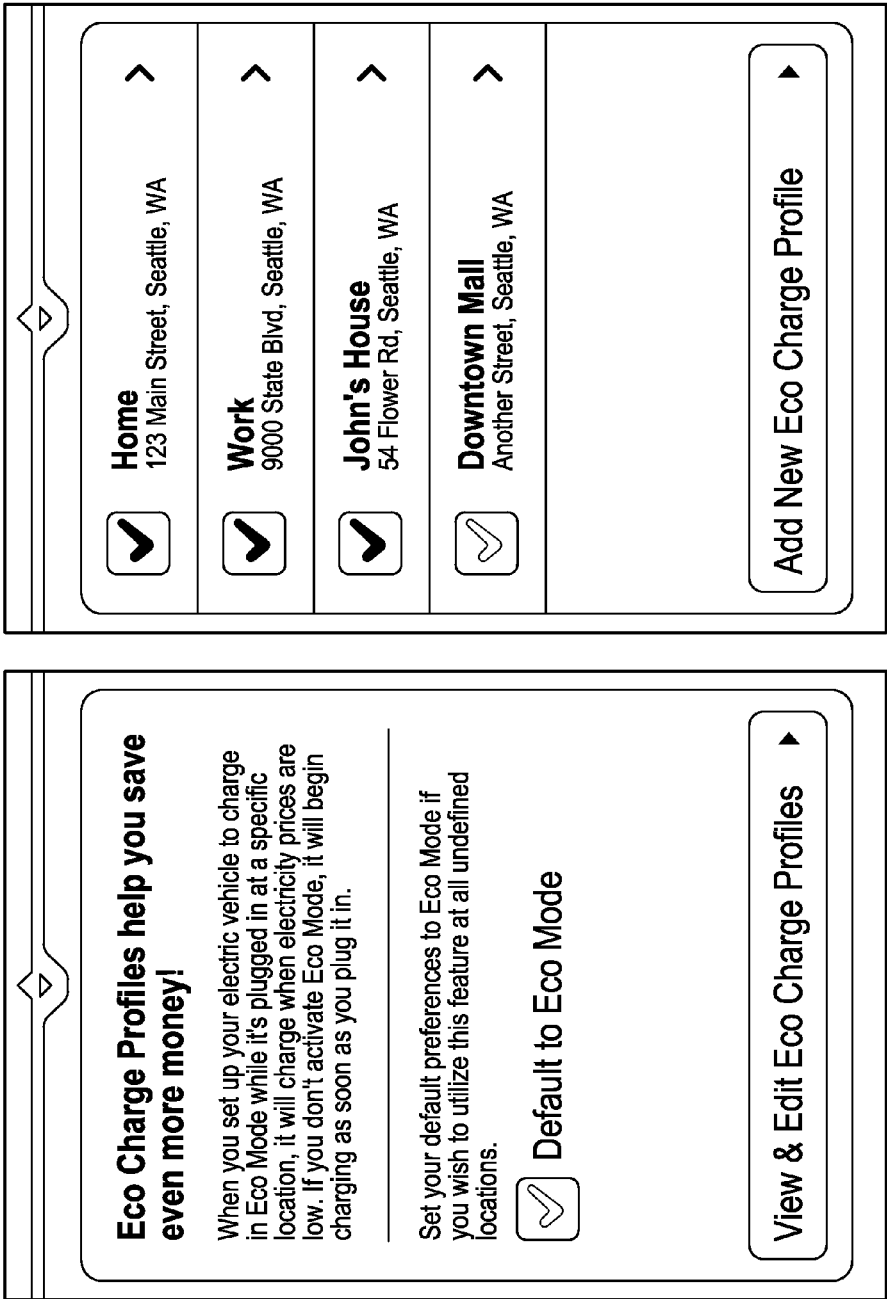


FIG. 11

FIG. 10

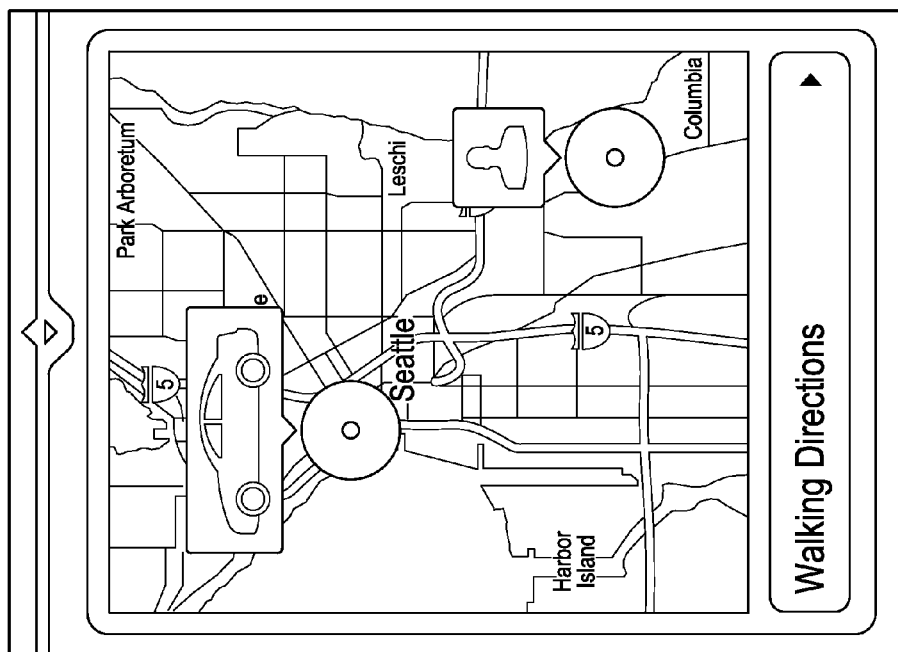


FIG. 12

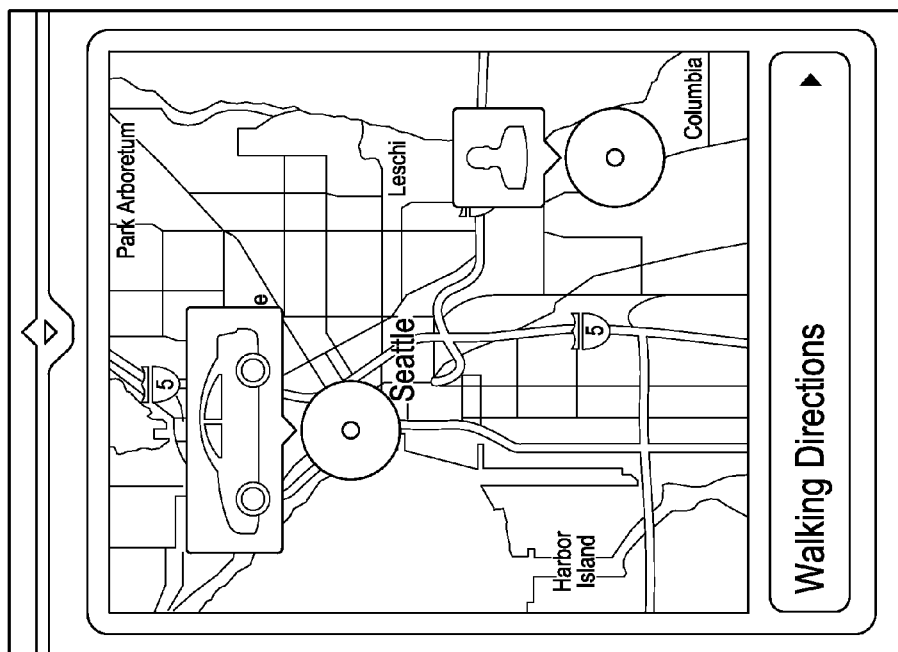


FIG. 13

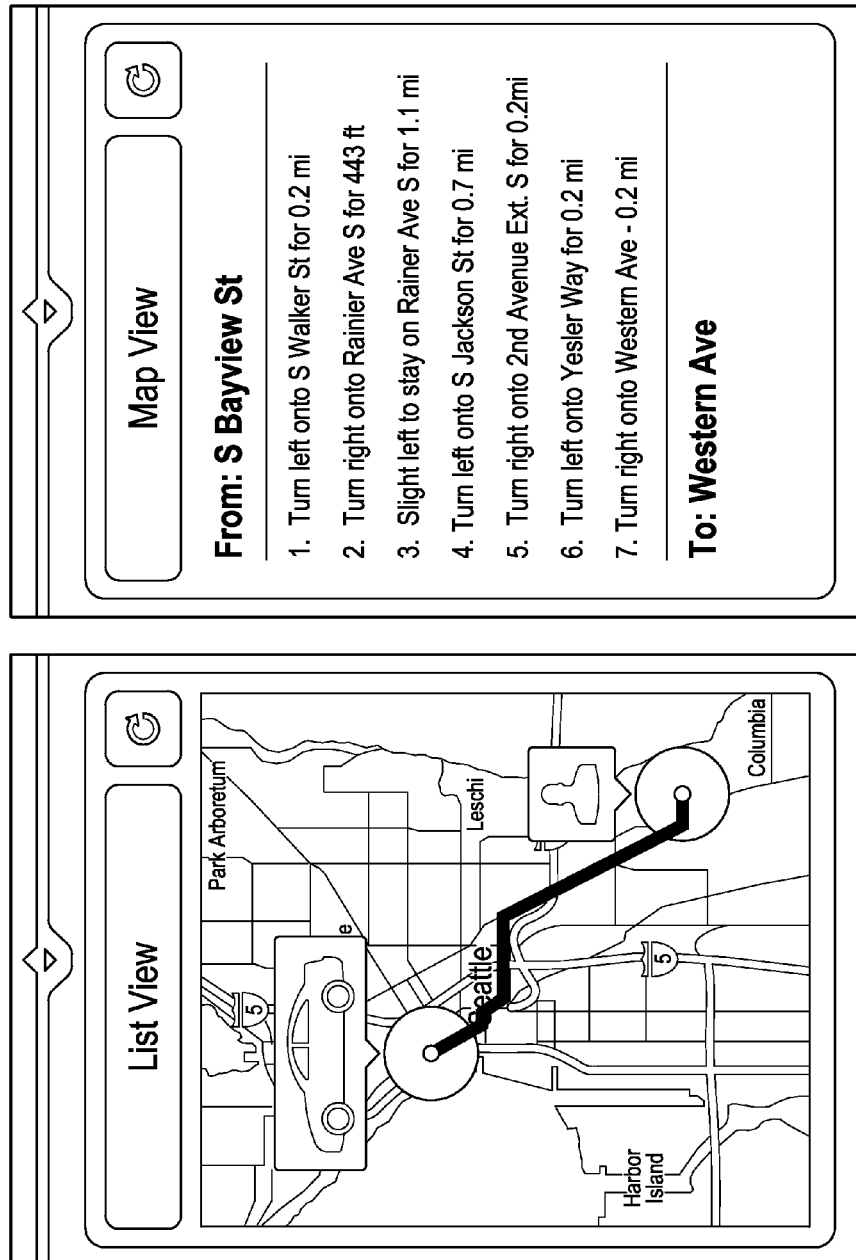


FIG. 15

FIG. 14

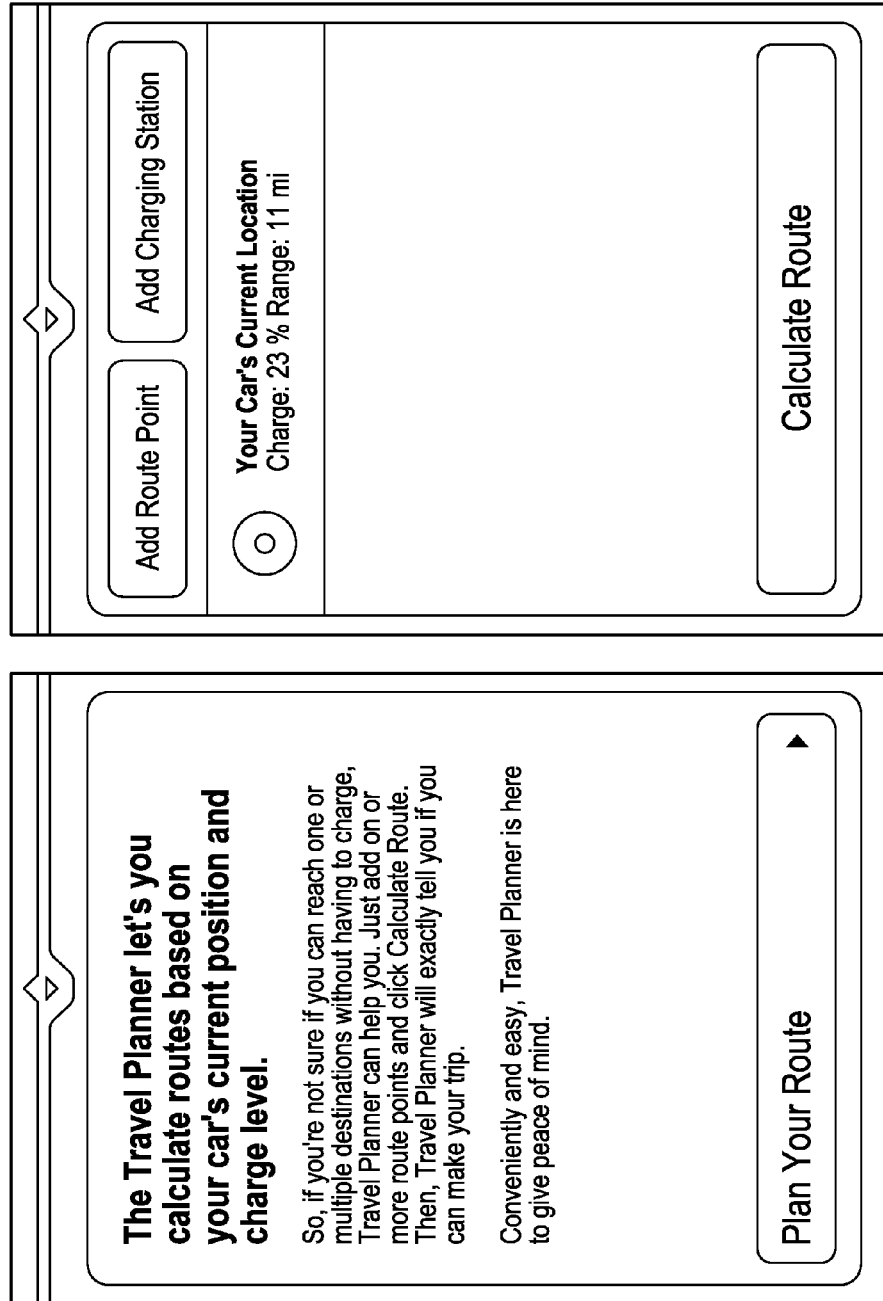


FIG. 17

FIG. 16

Home Address

Saved Destinations

Please enter a place or address
(e.g. 123 Main St, Seattle, WA)

123 Main St, Maywood

Next

Map View

We found:

A

123 Main St
Maywood, IL 60153
0.1 mi

>

B

123 Main St
Evanston, Cook, IL 60202
0.2 mi

>

C

123 Main St
Lemont, Cook, IL 60439
0.4 mi

>

D

123 Main St
Glen Ellyn, DuPage, IL 60439
0.3 mi

>

E

123 Main St
Rensenville DuPage, IL 60439
0.5 mi

>

FIG. 19

FIG. 18

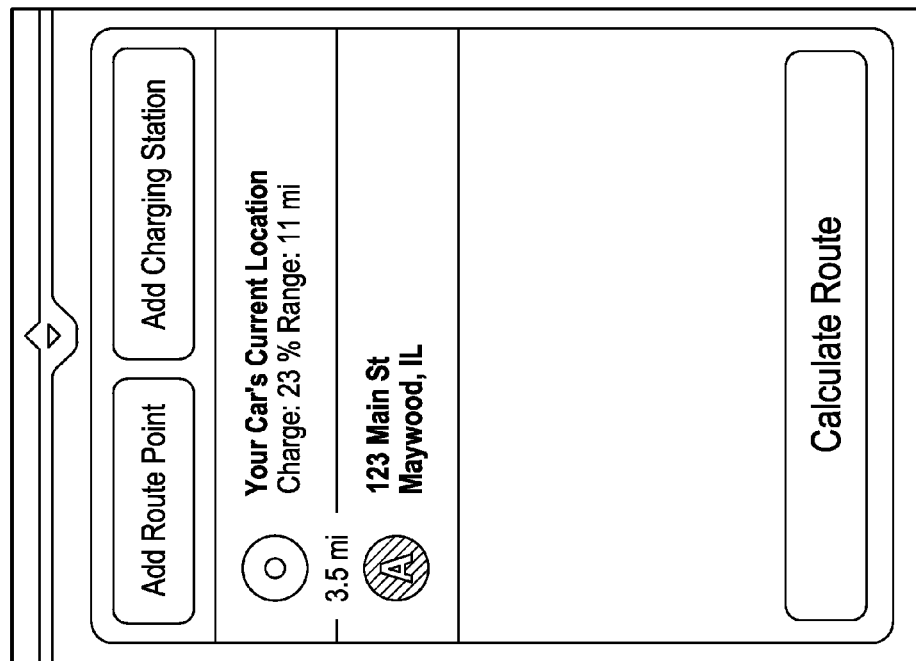


FIG. 21

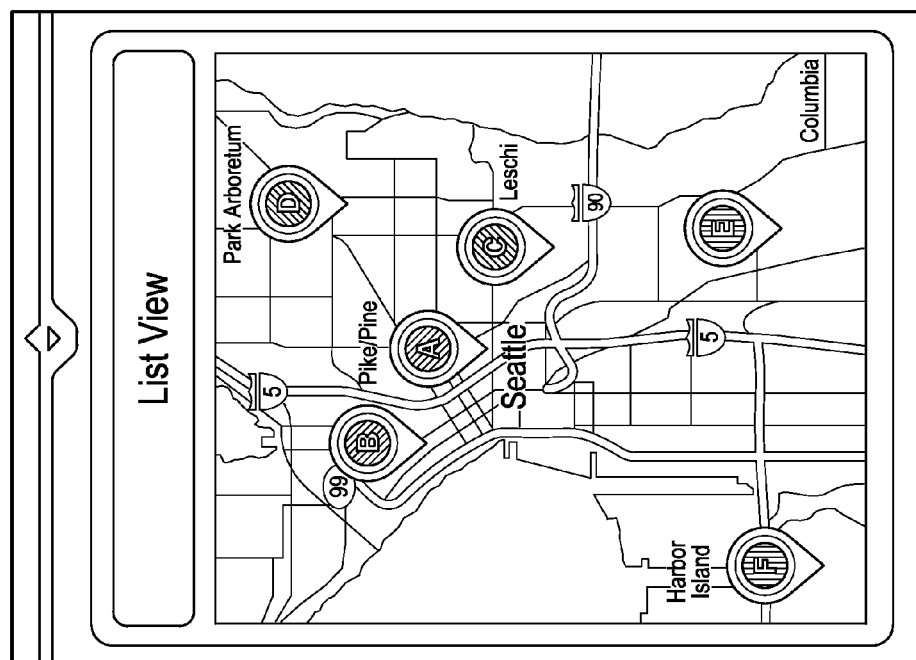


FIG. 20

Search Near Current Location

Please enter a street address or specific charge station name

123 Main St, Chicago

Brands

All

Charger Levels

All

Vehicle Range

All

☒ Network Stations Only

☐ Free Stations Only

☐ Public Stations Only

☐ Favorites Only

Next

Brands

All

Charger Levels

All

Vehicle Range

All

☒ Network Stations Only

☐ Free Stations Only

☐ Public Stations Only

☐ Favorites Only

Next

FIG. 22

FIG. 23

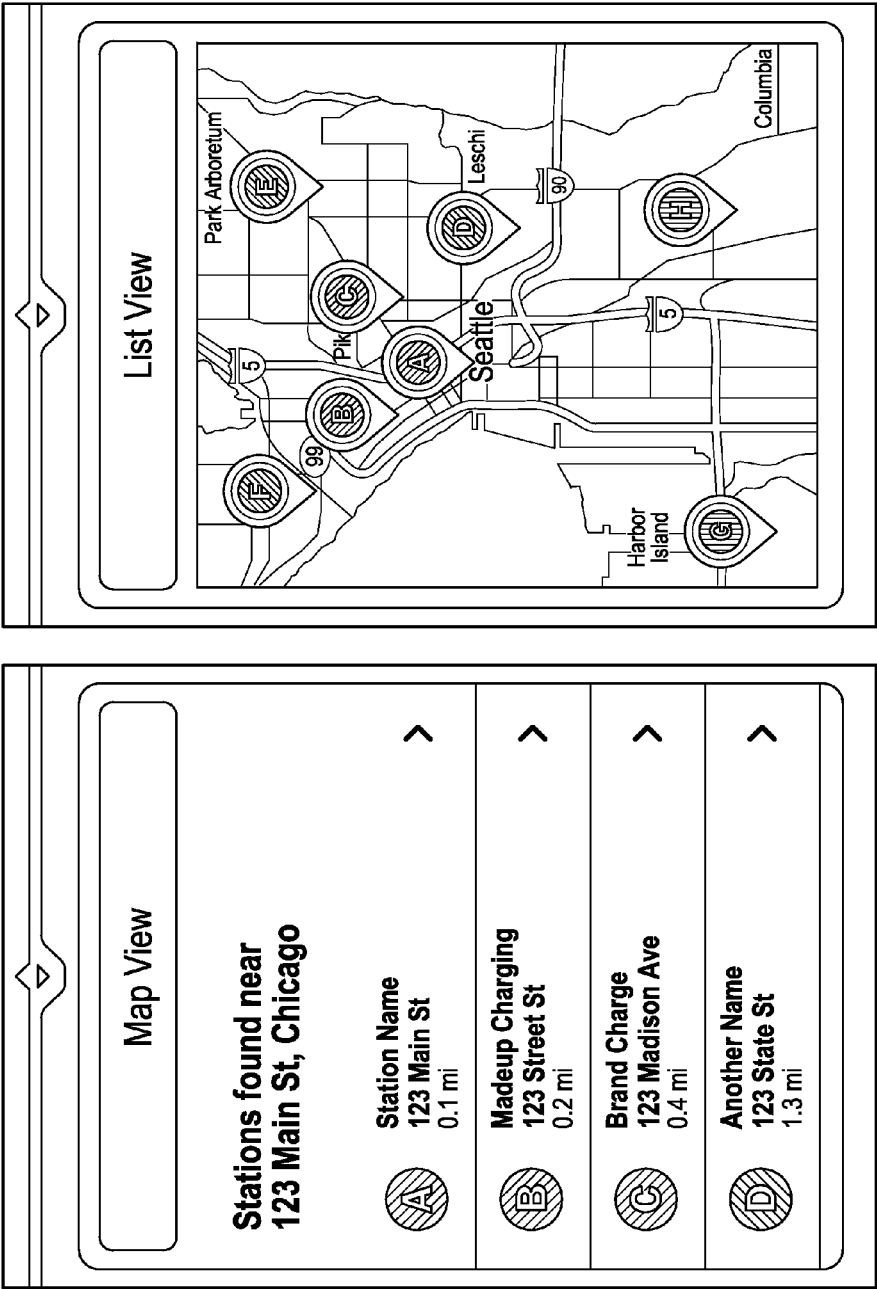


FIG. 25

FIG. 24




<div> <div>Add Route Point</div> <div>Add Charging Station</div> </div>	
<div>  </div>	<div> Your Car's Current Location Charge: 23 % Range: 11 mi </div>
<div>  </div>	<div> 123 Main St Maywood, IL </div>
<div>  </div>	<div> Station Name 123 Main Street Chicago, IL </div>
<div> <div>Calculate Route</div> </div>	

FIG. 27


	Station Name
Private use for tenants of Bank of America 5th Avenue Plaza	
Charger Levels: L1, L2, DC Fast	
Status	
As of today, 12:15 PM Port 1: 120V, 16A: available Port 2: 240V, 30A, J1772: available	
Address: 123 Main Street, Seattle WA 12345 Phone: (555) 123 4567 Access: Public, Gate is locked after 10:00 pm Price: n/a	
Use Charging Station	

FIG. 26

Please enter a place or address

666 Train Street, Seattle

Next

FIG. 28

<div> <div>Add Route Point</div> <div>Add Charging Station</div> </div>	
<div> <div>○</div> <div>3.5 mi</div> </div>	<div> <div> <div>Your Car's Current Location</div> <div>Charge: 23 % Range: 11 mi</div> </div> </div>
<div> <div>Ⓐ</div> <div>10.5 mi</div> </div>	<div> <div> <div>123 Main St Maywood, IL</div> <div>⏏</div> </div> </div>
<div> <div>Ⓑ</div> <div>16.9 mi</div> </div>	<div> <div> <div>Station Name 123 Main Street Chicago, IL</div> <div>⏏</div> </div> </div>
<div> <div>Ⓒ</div> </div>	<div> <div>Home</div> <div>⏏</div> </div>
<div>Calculate Route</div>	

FIG. 29

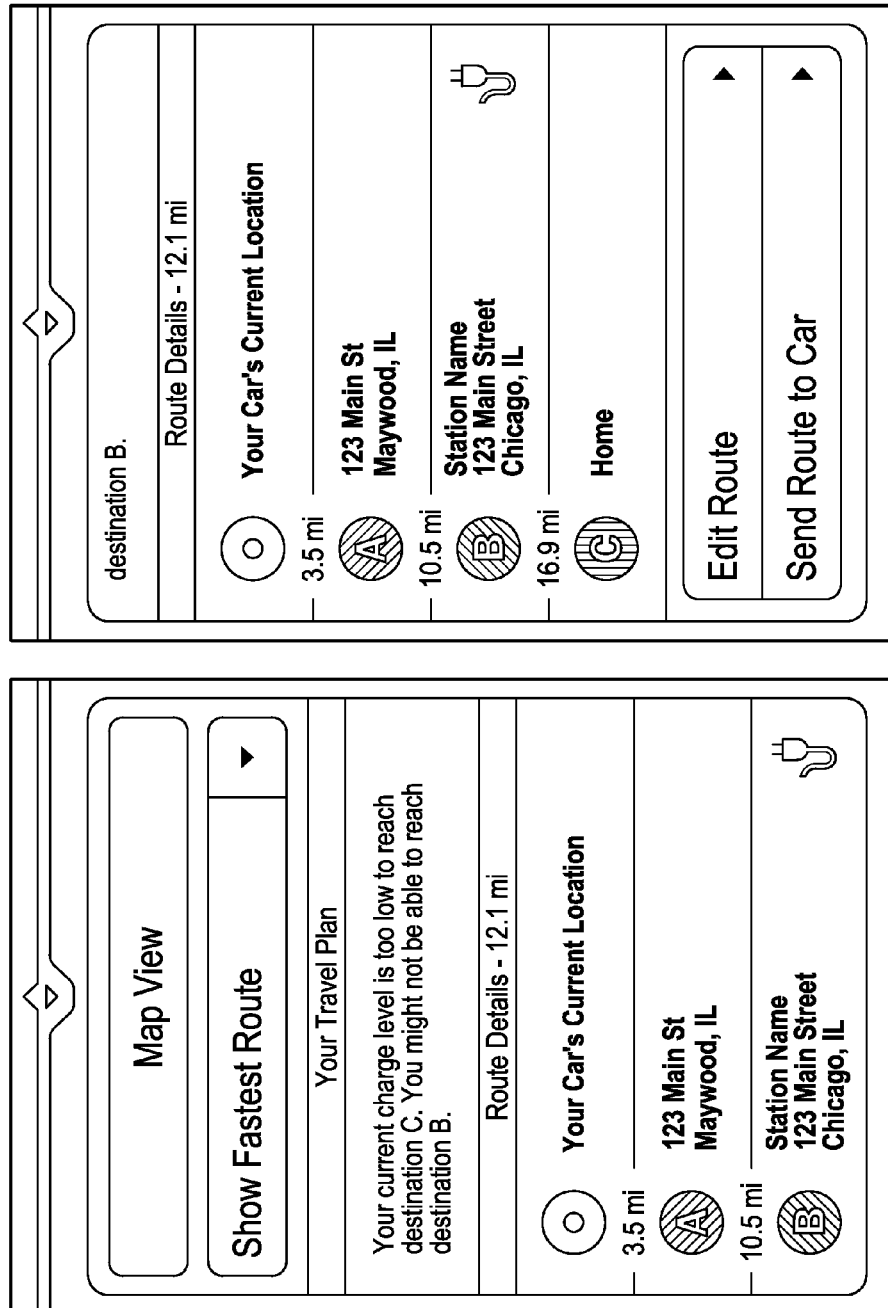


FIG. 31

FIG. 30

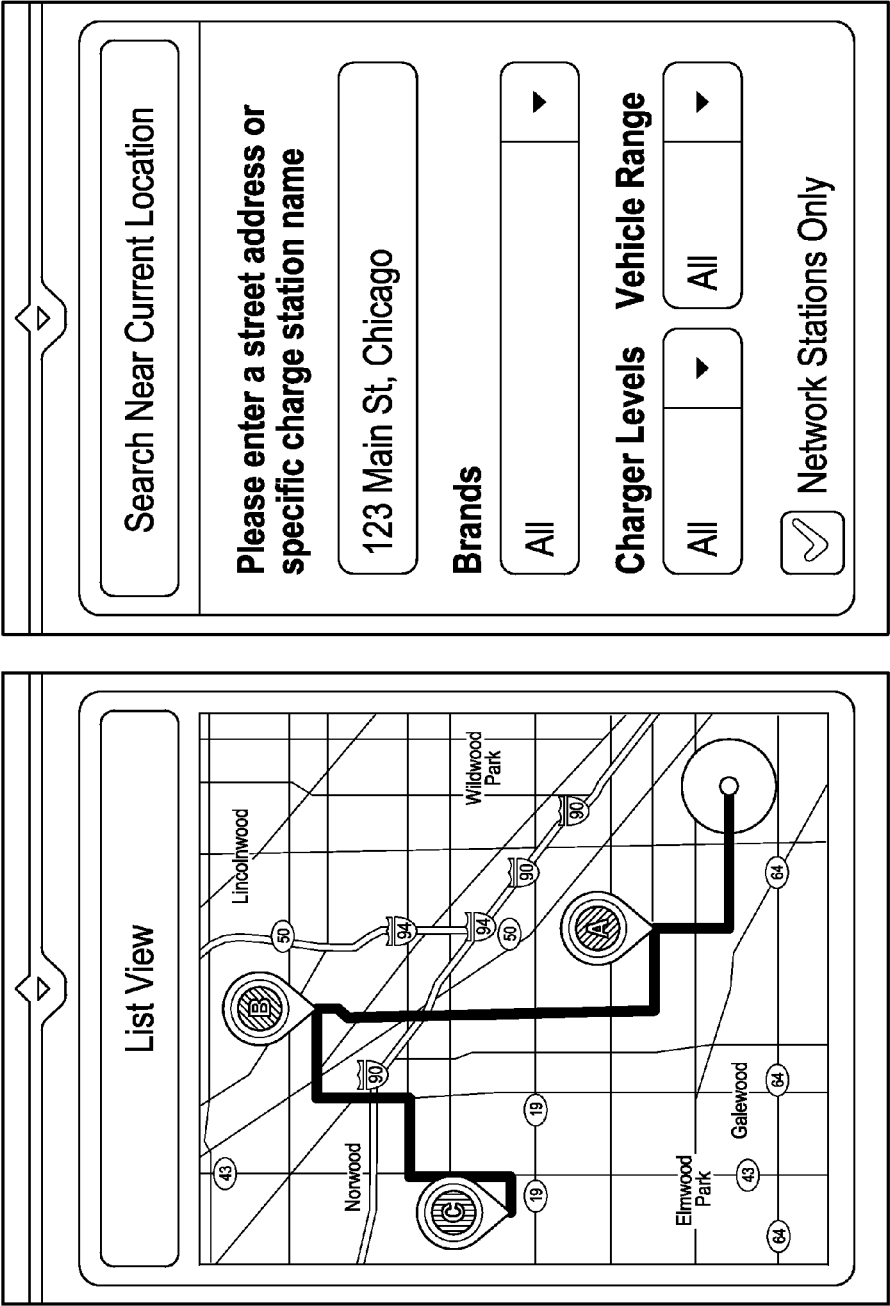


FIG. 33

FIG. 32

Map View

Stations found near
123 Main St, Chicago





	Station Name 123 Main St 0.1 mi	>
	Madeup Charging 123 Street St 0.2 mi	>
	Brand Charge 123 Madison Ave 0.4 mi	>
	Another Name 123 State St 1.3 mi	>

FIG. 35

Brands

All

Charger Levels

All

Vehicle Range

All

☒ Network Stations Only

☒ Free Stations Only

☒ Public Stations Only

☒ Favorites Only

Next

FIG. 34

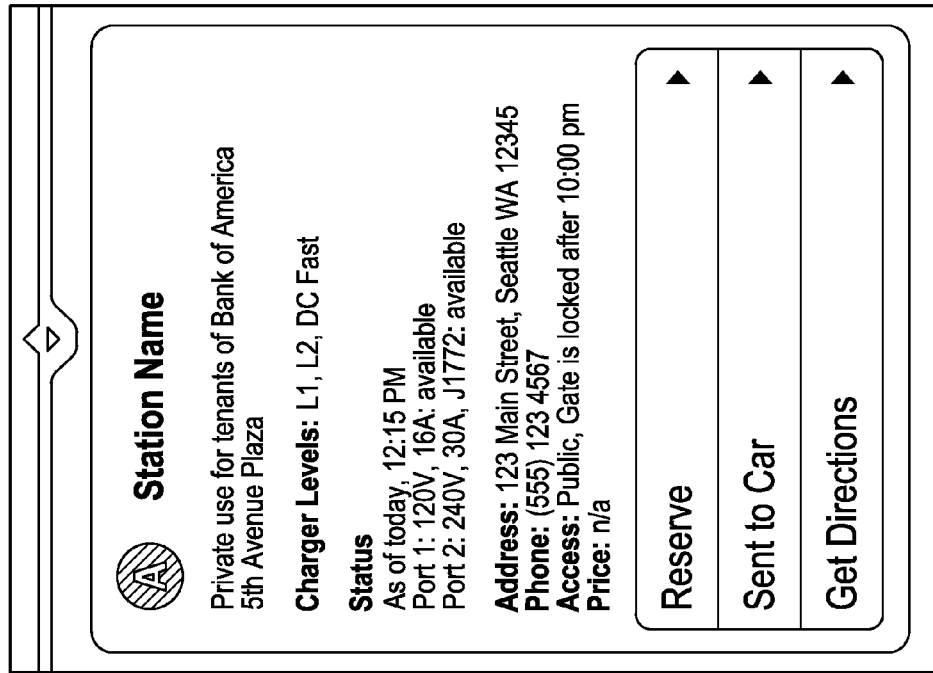


FIG. 37

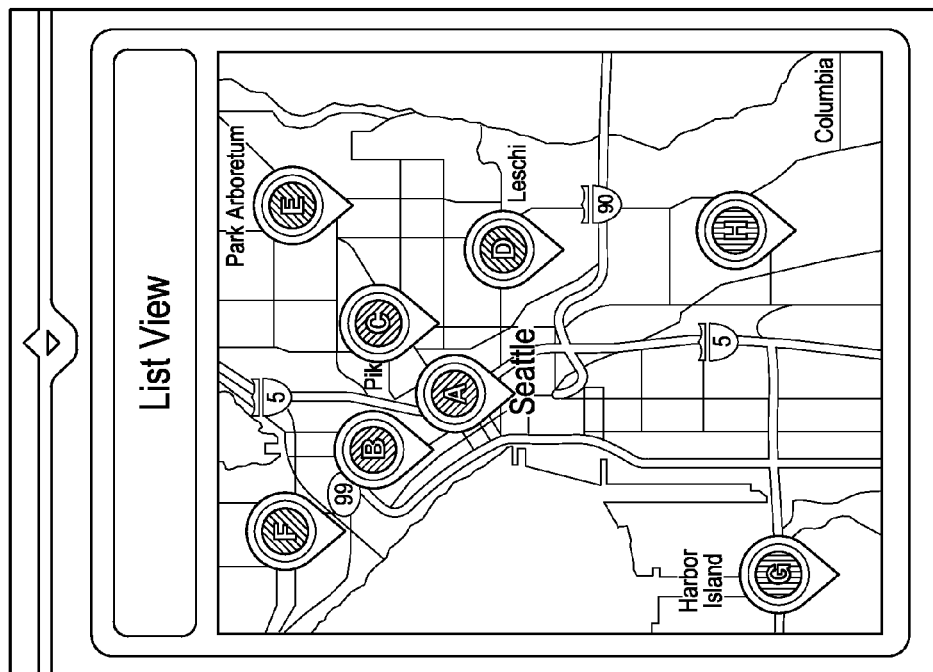


FIG. 36

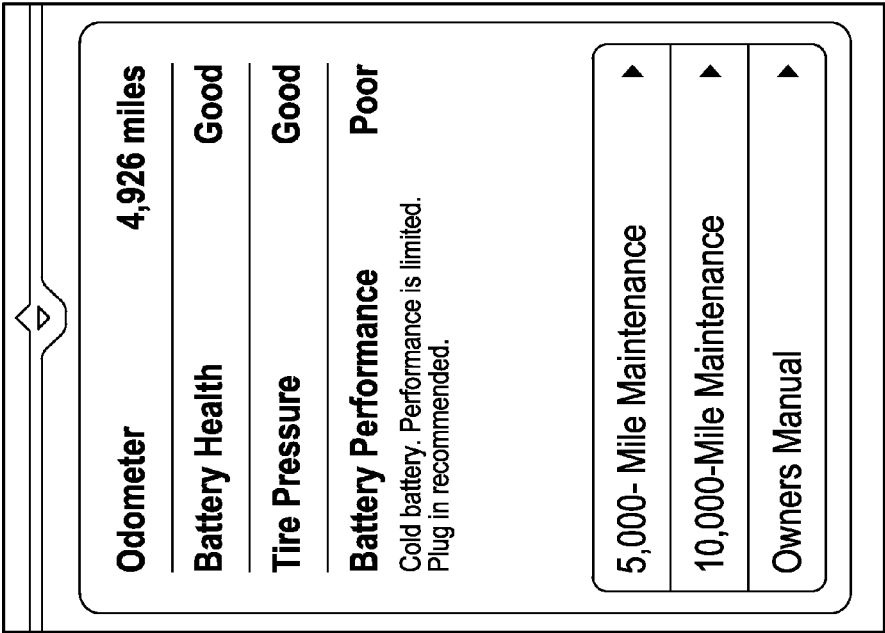


FIG. 39

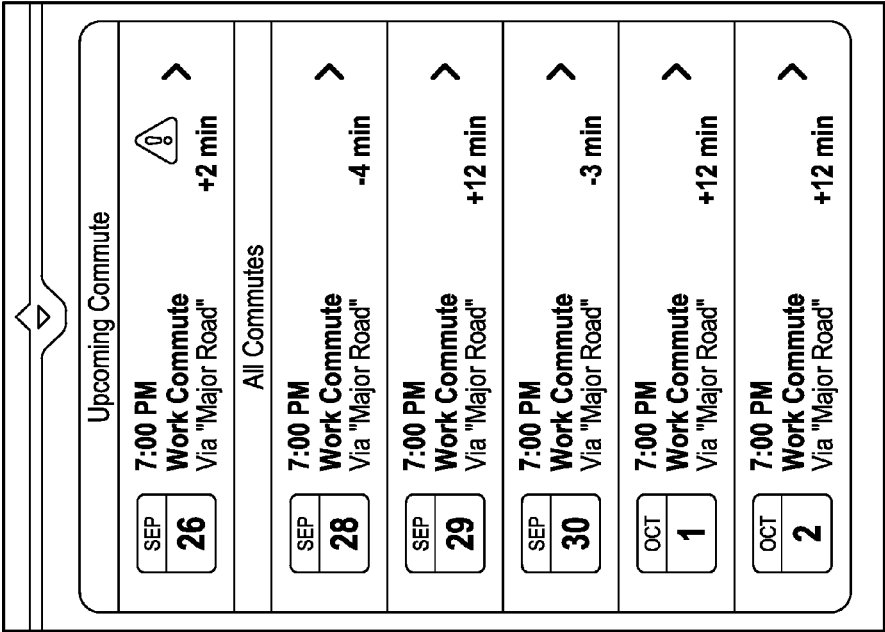


FIG. 38

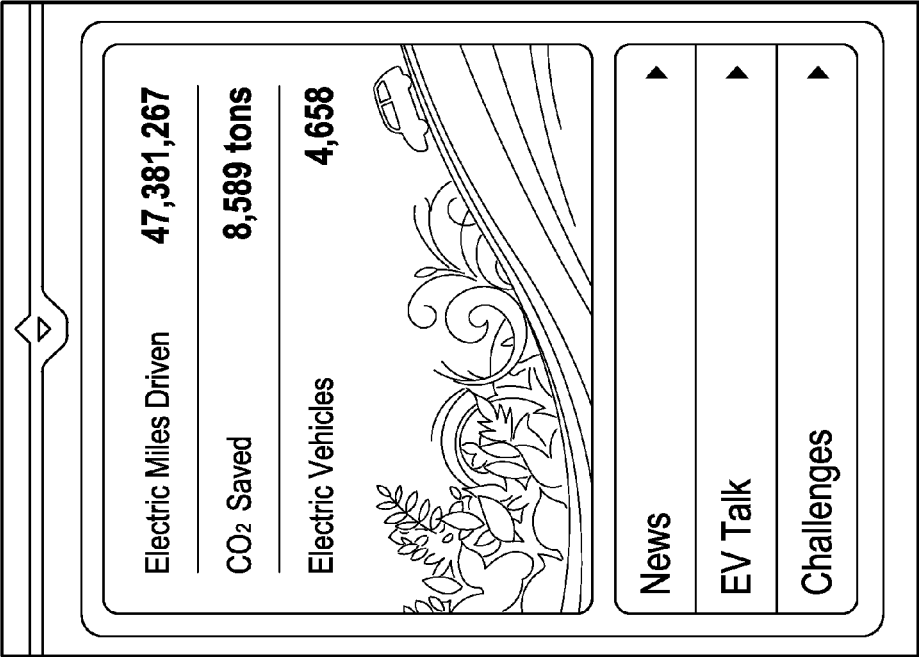


FIG. 41

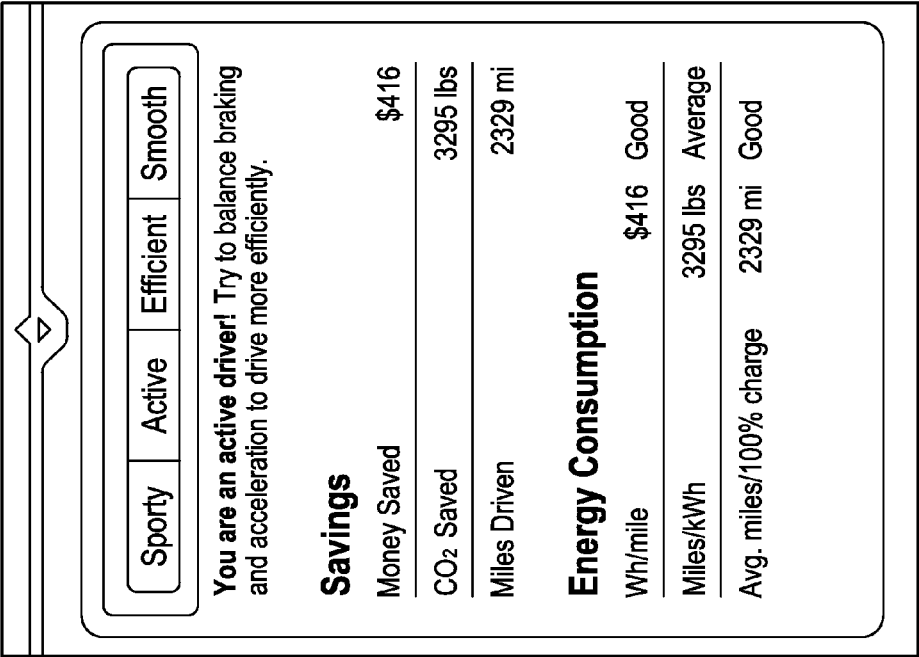


FIG. 40

Account

Community

Mobile App

First Name

John

Last Name

Doe

Email

john@madeup.com

Country

United States

Time Zone

CST

Mobile

+1 (555) 123 4567

Carrier

Verizon

Password

.....

FIG. 43

FIG. 42

Email

john@madeup.com

Country

United States

Time Zone

CST

Mobile

+1 (555) 123 4567

Carrier

Verizon

Password

.....

Confirm Password

.....

Apply Changes

Username

john1980

Associated Vehicle

John's EV

Share Home Base

☒

Share Total Miles Driven

☒

Share Owned Since

☒

Share My Achievements

☒

Share My Driving Style

☒

Apply Changes

FIG. 44

FIG. 45

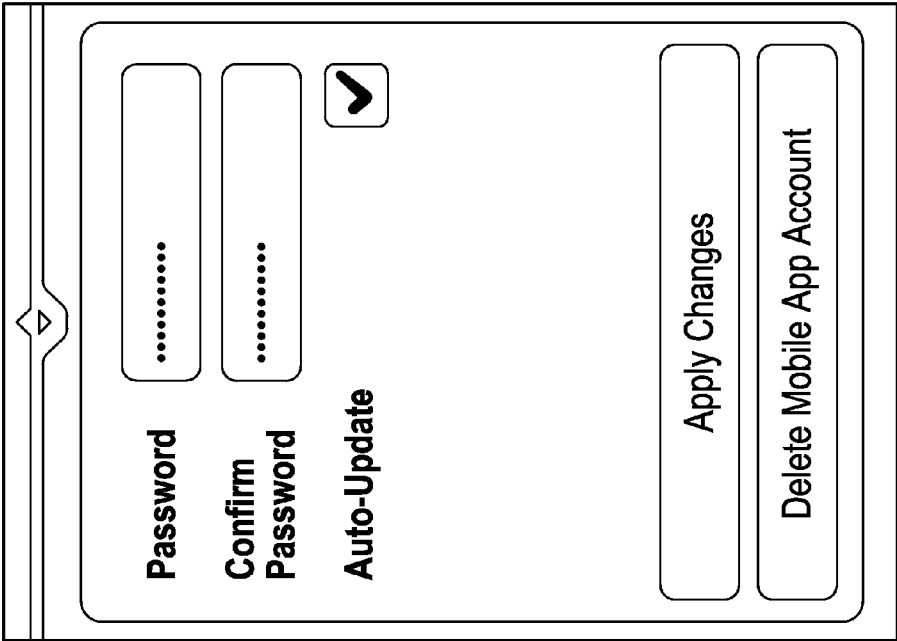


FIG. 46 is a screenshot of a mobile application interface for managing a ChargePoint account. The screen features a header with a left-pointing arrow icon. Below the header, there are three input fields: "Password" (containing "....."), "Confirm Password" (containing "....."), and "Auto-Update" (with a checked checkbox). At the bottom of the screen, there are two buttons: "Apply Changes" and "Delete Mobile App Account".

FIG. 46

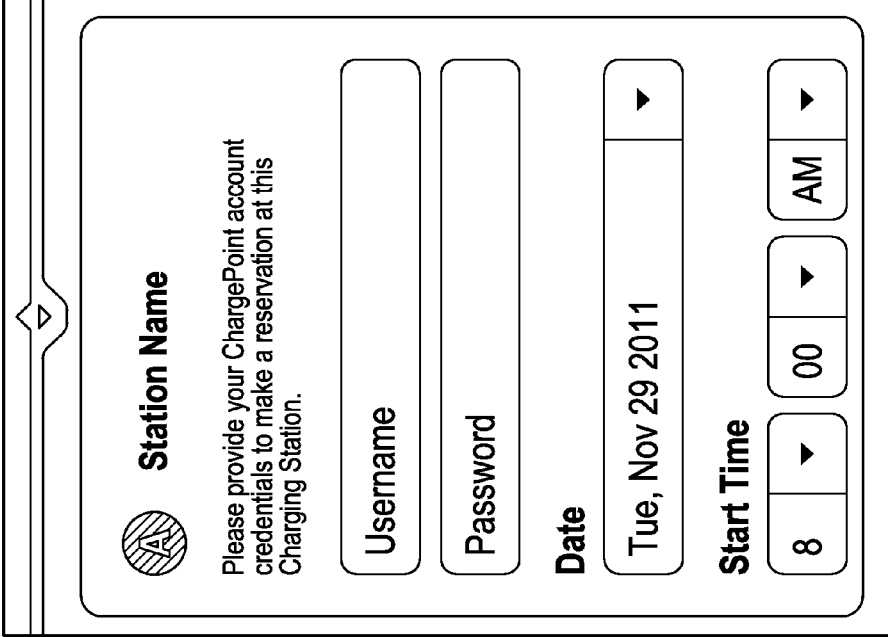


FIG. 47 is a screenshot of a mobile application interface for logging into a ChargePoint account. The screen features a header with a left-pointing arrow icon. Below the header, there is a "Station Name" section with a circular icon containing the letter 'A' and the text "Please provide your ChargePoint account credentials to make a reservation at this Charging Station." Below this, there are four input fields: "Username", "Password", "Date" (containing "Tue, Nov 29 2011"), and "Start Time" (containing "8", "00", and "AM").

FIG. 47

FIG. 48 is a reservation form. It features a header with a station icon and a title. Below the header, there is a confirmation message. The main section contains several input fields: a date field (Tue, Nov 29 2011), a start time field (8:00 AM), a duration field (4 hours), a total price field (\$0.00), and a reminder field (None). A large 'Reserve' button is located at the bottom right.

Station Name

Your charging station reservation is confirmed.

Reservation Details

Station Name Madeup Station Name
Address 123 Main Street, Seattle WA
Date Tue, Nov 29 2011
Start Time 8:00 AM
Duration 4 hours
Total Price \$0.00
Reminder None

Close

Cancel Reservation

FIG. 49

FIG. 49 is a confirmation screen. It displays the reservation details from FIG. 48. The details are: Station Name (Madeup Station Name), Address (123 Main Street, Seattle WA), Date (Tue, Nov 29 2011), Start Time (8:00 AM), Duration (4 hours), Total Price (\$0.00), and Reminder (None). At the bottom, there are two buttons: 'Close' and 'Cancel Reservation'.

Station Name

Your charging station reservation is confirmed.

Reservation Details

Station Name Madeup Station Name
Address 123 Main Street, Seattle WA
Date Tue, Nov 29 2011
Start Time 8:00 AM
Duration 4 hours
Total Price \$0.00
Reminder None

Close

Cancel Reservation

FIG. 48

Station Name

Canceling this reservation will result in a penalty of \$0.00 that you will have to pay. Do you really want to cancel this reservation?

Yes

No

FIG. 50

7:00 PM

Work Commute

SEP

26

Commute Details

Commute is:

Travel time is:

Distance:

+12 min

40 min

21 miles

Alerts or events copy is displayed here. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet.

Alternate Route:

+5 min

View Alternate Route

FIG. 51

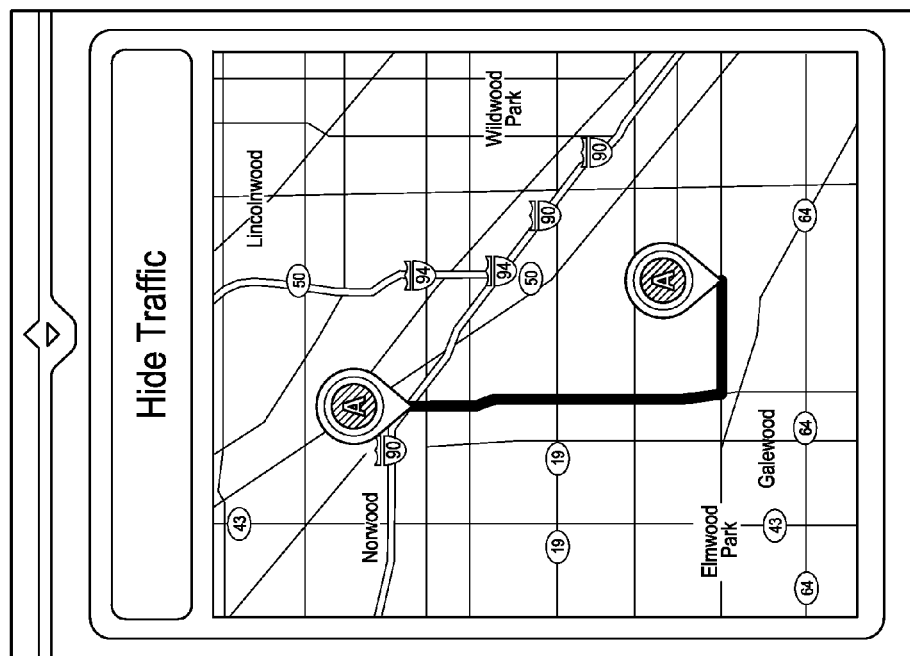


FIG. 53

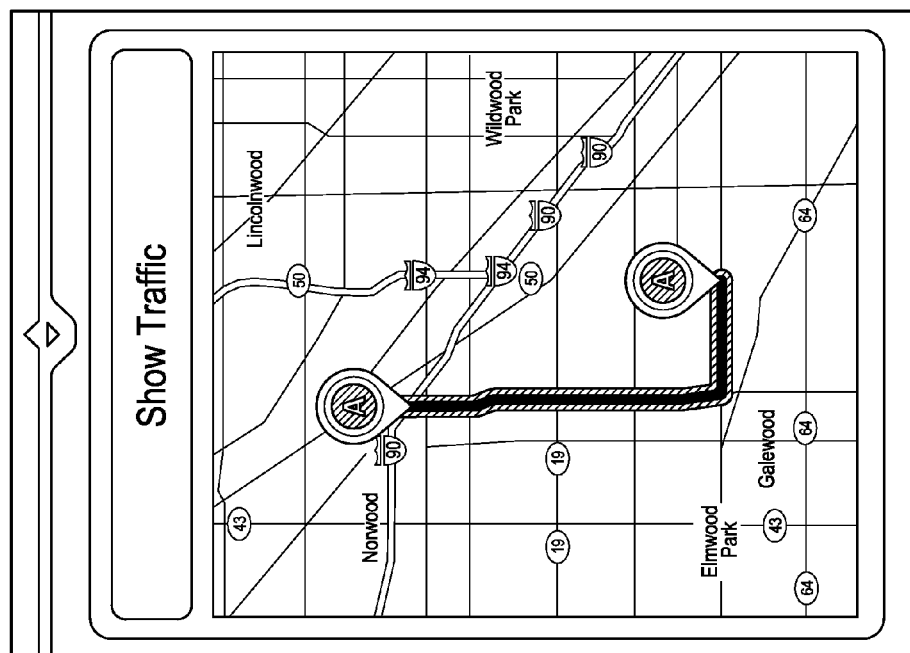
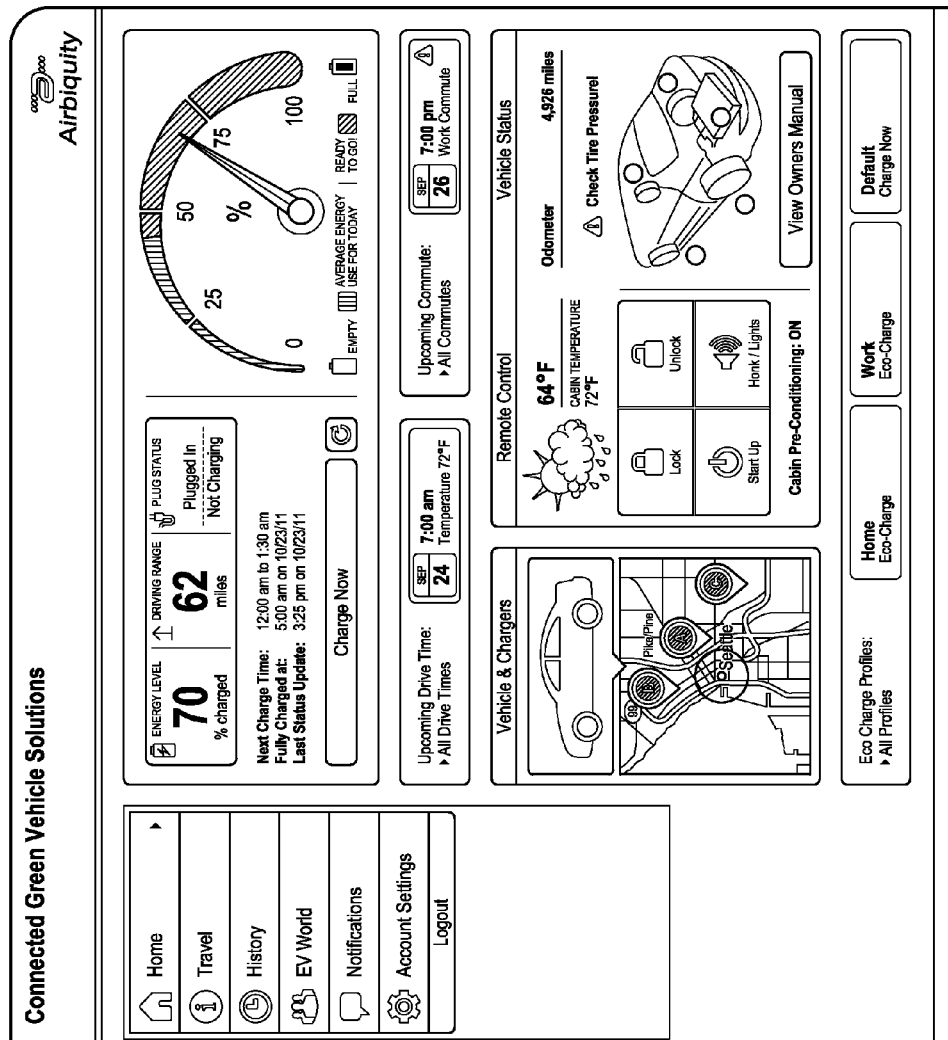


FIG. 52



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ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING NETWORK SERVICES

RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a divisional of U.S. Ser. No. 13/736,805, filed on Jan. 8, 2013 which claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/584,688 filed Jan. 9, 2012 and all are incorporated herein by this reference.

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TECHNICAL FIELD

This invention pertains to methods and apparatus for networked electric vehicle (EV) user support services.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Conventional technical schemes are available for assisting a driver in determining an appropriate time to “fill up” their vehicle. The conventional technical schemes typically involve a fuel gauge installed in the dashboard of a vehicle. The fuel gauge may have a full marking, an empty marking, other markings in between, and a needle indicating current fuel level relative to the markings. The gauge may also include a fuel light to activate when current fuel level reaches a preset fraction of maximum fuel. A driver can use the fuel gauge to determine an appropriate time to “fill up”.

While these conventional technical schemes for assisting a driver in determining an appropriate time to “fill up” or refuel their vehicle, partially or completely, are typically sufficient for gasoline powered vehicles, electric vehicle usage is different than gasoline powered vehicle usage. In particular, electric vehicles considered as a whole typically have a shorter range (distance between “fill-ups”) than gasoline powered vehicles. Electric vehicles typically require several hours to recharge, which is longer than the minutes needed to refuel a gasoline powered vehicle. Also, electric charging stations are not currently ubiquitous (as compared to gasoline stations). In view of the forgoing, a technical solution is needed to assist a driver of an electric vehicle in determining an appropriate time and place to recharge their vehicle battery.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The following is a summary of the invention in order to provide a basic understanding of some aspects of the invention. This summary is not intended to identify key/critical elements of the invention or to delineate the scope of the invention. Its sole purpose is to present some concepts of the invention in a simplified form as a prelude to the more detailed description that is presented later.

In one aspect, this disclosure describes a feature for EV users to reduce anxiety that may be caused by uncertainty as to whether or not an electric vehicle has sufficient charge to carry out its agenda for the remainder of the day. In other aspects, software analyzes a planned route, in view of a

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variety of information including but not limited to a history of prior usage data for the vehicle, driving style, planned route, current traffic conditions, and current charge or energy level of the vehicle batteries, to determine whether it will have sufficient range to complete the proposed trip.

In another aspect, the system provides information to a user regarding charging stations located either nearby or along a proposed route, for recharging the vehicle. Range analysis, mentioned above, combined with route planning and charging station data can be used to identify charging stations along the route, to check their suitability for the vehicle, to check their availability, and to make a reservation for charging at a selected charging station.

In a preferred embodiment, some user services and features are provided through communications between a “client” device in the car and a central server computer, further explained below. Preferably, the central server is arranged for communication with at least one charging station network.

Additional aspects and advantages of this invention will be apparent from the following detailed description of preferred embodiments, which proceeds with reference to the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a simplified diagram illustrating a system to deliver driver services to operators of electric vehicles (EV).

FIG. 2 is an example of a screen display for login to a client application consistent with the present disclosure.

FIG. 3 is an example of a client application screen display indicating a readiness status of the electric vehicle.

FIG. 4 is an example of a client application screen display showing icons corresponding to a variety of available user services and features.

FIG. 5 is an example of a client application screen display showing examples of remote control features.

FIG. 6 is an example of a client application screen display regarding specification of drive times.

FIG. 7 shows an example of a listing of drive times by day of the week.

FIG. 8 is an example of a client application screen display for adding or “programming” a drive time.

FIG. 9 is a continuation of the screen display of FIG. 8, which may be accessed by scrolling.

FIG. 10 is an example of a client application screen display regarding eco-charge profiles, to take advantage of variation in electricity prices for charging an electric vehicle.

FIG. 11 is an example of a client application screen display showing a listing of eco-charge profiles per location.

FIG. 12 is an example of a client application screen display for selecting a charging location to define a charge profile.

FIG. 13 shows an example of a client application screen display comprising a map showing the user’s current location and a current location of the electric vehicle.

FIG. 14 is an example of a client application screen display showing a suggested route on a map for walking from the user’s current location to the current location of the electric vehicle.

FIG. 15 is an example of a client application screen display showing the suggested route of FIG. 14 in a list view.

FIG. 16 is an example of a client application screen display for a travel planner feature.

FIG. 17 shows an example of a client application screen display for adding a route point or adding a charging station for planning a trip.

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FIG. 18 is an example of a client application screen display for entering a place or address as part of planning a trip.

FIG. 19 shows a listing of locations that were found based on the data entered in FIG. 18.

FIG. 20 is an example of a map display showing the locations that are listed in the screen display of FIG. 19, enabling user selection of a desired location or route point by touching the screen at the corresponding location indicator.

FIG. 21 is an example of a client application screen display showing the EV current location and status, along with the selected route point.

FIG. 22 is an example of a client application screen display for conducting a search for charging stations near a current location of the EV.

FIG. 23 is a continuation of the screen display of FIG. 22 which may be accessed, for example, by scrolling.

FIG. 24 is an example of a client application screen display showing a listing of charging stations found near a requested or current location.

FIG. 25 is a map display showing locations of the charging stations that are listed in the display of FIG. 24.

FIG. 26 is an example of a client application screen display showing details of a selected charging station, including its present status.

FIG. 27 is an example of a client application screen display showing the electric vehicle's current location and status, and showing route points that have been selected for a trip.

FIG. 28 is an example of a client application screen display arranged for user to enter a home address, which may be used as an anchor point or route point.

FIG. 29 is an example of a client application screen display showing a car's present location and status, and a series of route points for a trip.

FIG. 30 is an example of a client application screen display regarding planning a proposed trip.

FIG. 31 is a continuation from FIG. 30 showing details of the proposed route.

FIG. 32 is an example of a map screen display illustrating the proposed route.

FIG. 33 is an example of a client application screen display for searching for a charging station near a defined location.

FIG. 34 is a continuation of the display of FIG. 33 showing more details for a charging station search.

FIG. 35 is an example of a screen display showing a listing of charging stations that were found pursuant to the search defined in FIGS. 33-34.

FIG. 36 is an example of a map display showing the locations of the charging stations listed in the screen display of FIG. 35.

FIG. 37 is an example of a screen display showing details of a selected charging station with an option to reserve charging time at the charging station.

FIG. 38 is an example of a client application screen display showing an upcoming commute and a series of stored commutes, along with travel time information based on current and statistically projected traffic conditions.

FIG. 39 is an example of a client application screen display showing a health report for the electric vehicle.

FIG. 40 is an example of a client application screen display showing information about a user's driving style based on a history of trips, and displaying information reflecting monetary savings and energy consumption.

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FIG. 41 is an example of screen display showing aggregated information for a given group or fleet of electric vehicles.

FIG. 42 is an example of a client application screen display for managing a user's account and other operations.

FIG. 43 may be a continuation of FIG. 42 for maintaining a user profile.

FIG. 44 is a continuation of FIG. 43 for maintaining a user profile.

FIG. 45 is an example of a screen display regarding a user profile showing additional options.

FIG. 46 is an example of a screen display for updating a user password for a mobile application account.

FIG. 47 is an example of a client application screen display for making a reservation at a selected charging station.

FIG. 48 is a continuation of the prior screen display for setting more details of a charging station reservation.

FIG. 49 is an example of a screen display confirming a charging station reservation.

FIG. 50 is an example of a screen display related to canceling a reservation at an EV charging station.

FIG. 51 is an example of a client application screen display regarding a stored commute to work, with information on travel time and an alternate route.

FIG. 52 is an example of a map display illustrating a proposed route.

FIG. 53 is an example of a screen display of the map of FIG. 52 showing an indication of traffic conditions.

FIG. 54 is an example of a web page interface to a server for electric vehicle services.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

FIG. 1 illustrates a system to assist a driver of an electric vehicle (15). For example, the system can be used for determining an appropriate time or place to recharge the vehicle battery. The system 100 includes a server 12, which may comprise one or more servers and other resources, wherever located. It has suitable means for communications over one or more networks, such as the Internet and/or a telecommunications network. It may communicate via a suitable gateway to a wireless telecommunications network. In some embodiments, the wireless telecommunications network may be used for server communications with a client device 11. In some cases, in-band signaling may be used for data communications during a voice channel call on the wireless telecommunications network. In some embodiments, a broadband or WiFi network may be used for server communications with a client device 11. Any or all of the above, as well as a wired network, POTS, cable, or other means not yet known may be used for server communications with other one or more EV charging station networks (not shown), which in turn may communicate with individual charging stations 30.

A client device 11 may comprise, in some embodiments, a personal portable device (cell phone, PDA, laptop, tablet computer, etc.), a vehicle "head unit," a desktop computer, or the like. The servers 12 typically include a memory device to store instructions that, if executed by a computing device, perform operations that will be described herein as operations of the server 12.

The server 12 may collect, from an electric vehicle or a computing device coupled to the electric vehicle, data for learning driving patterns. In a preferred embodiment, the server transmits a query or request to a wireless communi-

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cation device embedded in the EV to acquire historical driving data. In an alternative embodiment, a client device 11 in or near the EV may be used to acquire the data and transmit it to the server. The server 12 generates a driving history based on the collected data. The server 12 may store the driving history in a database. The database may be organized, for example, as a plurality of entries or records, each indicating a particular driving trip of the subject vehicle. Data may be aggregated over a fleet of vehicles.

A trip record may include, for example, a distance traveled by the electric vehicle, how much energy was used by the electric vehicle during the trip, and a time stamp indicating a date and time that the trip started and/or ended. Additional information in a trip record may include a route, start and stop locations, way points, traffic data and or topological data. It may include weather conditions or temperature, traffic conditions and other variables. A detailed record may include periodic speed readings.

The server 12 analyzes the database entries. In one example, the server 12 may identify patterns based on the database entries, i.e. a difference between certain days of the week vs. other days of the weeks, which has some consistency across weeks, i.e. observing that 18 kilowatt hours are typically used on Wednesday while 15 kilowatt hours are typically used on a Thursday.

In one example, if a pattern is identified, the analysis may include the server 12 interfacing with a calendaring application to determine future trips that would skew an expected usage based on an identified pattern. The server 12 may check the appointment for address information. However, if the appointment lists a person but not address information, the server 12 may obtain address information listed for the person from the appointment using contacts or some other database.

In one example, the server 12 may determine an expected energy usage for a time period to occur based on the analysis. The determination can consider parameters such as temperature, weather conditions, characteristics of expected travel when they vary from historical travel (such as the use of a hilly route or a high speed freeway that are not normally used), traffic, tire pressure, vehicle load (number of passengers), or other variables. In one example, the determination may include comparing a current or expected temperature for the time period with an average temperature based on prior corresponding time periods. Energy usage may be higher than expected from the identified pattern if the day is unusually cold, for example, because a driver may be expected to utilize the vehicle's heater more than usual. Conversely, in hot weather the air conditioning will have a similar impact. HVAC in general requires energy from the batteries. Also, weather forecasts or current conditions can also be used in the determination. For example, expected energy usage may be different than expected based on an identified pattern if there is currently snow on the ground or other weather conditions that could affect frictional coefficients of the tires of the electric vehicle.

The server 12 may generate a presentation for a driver of the electric vehicle based on the determination. The generated presentation is to be displayed using the client 11 (in one example the generated presentation may be displayed on a visual and/or audio display of a vehicle head unit of the electric vehicle).

The generated presentation may indicate whether the amount of energy currently stored in the battery of the electric vehicle is greater than the expected energy usage for a particular time period, e.g. the rest of the day, based on the determination. In one example, the generated presentation

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specifies that the driver is "Ready To Go"TM ("Ready to Go" is a trademark of Airbiquity Inc.) if the amount of energy currently stored in the battery of the electric vehicle is greater than the expected energy usage for the rest of the day. In an embodiment the determination may be made not for the whole day, but for the morning commute to work, for example, or return home from the office. A screen for the example described in the immediately preceding paragraph is shown in FIG. 3. The shading extending from 0 to below 50% represents the determination of energy usage for the day. The dial indicates energy available in the battery.

FIG. 2 is an example of a screen display for login to a client application consistent with the present disclosure. In this example, the login screen is shown for a smart phone type of portable device. Suitable applications or "apps" may be provided for various different client devices as noted, and a similar application may be deployed on a vehicle head unit. In FIGS. 3-53, a smart phone or iPhone display screen is used by way of illustration and not limitation. Any display, including a windshield "head up" display, may be used.

Referring again to FIG. 1, the server 12 may store an application 20 to be downloaded to a personal portable device for operation thereon. In one example, the application 20 is downloaded to a personal portable device, such as a mobile phone. The personal portable device operating the application can remotely control a component of the vehicle.

In one example, the downloaded application causes the screen shown in FIG. 3 to be displayed on the personal portable device. The "charge now button" causes the personal portable device to transmit a signal that causes the electric vehicle to begin charging (so long as the electric vehicle is plugged in to a utility power source). Other components of the vehicle may be controlled using the Remote Control feature further described below.

FIG. 4 is an example of a client application screen display showing icons corresponding to a variety of available user services and features. Other features may be added or removed. For example, new applications later developed may be downloaded from the server and installed on the client device.

FIG. 5 is an example of a client application screen display showing examples of remote control features. These may include operation of vehicle door locks, horn, lights, and motor startup or stop. The remote control may indicate current cabin temperature, and may enable remote control of heating or cooling operations to condition to cabin temperature prior to user boarding.

FIG. 6 is an example of a client application screen display for utilizing a feature that may be called Drive Times. This enables a user to specify regular or repeating "drive times" or trips. For example, a commute between home and work locations may define a drive time. The times, days of the week and locations may be "programmed" and stored. If a car is plugged into a charger at work all day, for example, it may try to take advantage of variations in charging cost (prices) if it needs charging for only, say one hour. FIG. 7 shows an example of a listing of drive times by day of the week. It also shows a desired cabin temperature for departure time. The remote control feature may utilize this information to begin pre-heating the cabin if necessary in advance of the scheduled departure or "drive time." A button at the bottom of the screen enables adding a new drive time; it may be used to invoke a screen display like that shown in FIG. 8.

FIG. 8 is an example of a client application screen display for adding a new drive time. A time of day is specified, and days of the week are selected. Optional pre-conditioning of

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the cabin may be selected, as well as pre-heating seats. FIG. 9 is a continuation of the screen display of FIG. 8, which may be accessed by scrolling. It shows check boxes for selecting days of the week for the subject drive time. See discussion of commutes below with regard to FIG. 38.

FIG. 10 is an example of a client application screen display regarding "Eco-Charge Profiles," a feature designed to take advantage of variations in electricity pricing for charging an electric vehicle. Each profile may be associated to a specific location where charging is available. FIG. 11 is an example of a client application screen display showing a listing of eco-charge profiles per location. A button at the bottom enables adding a new location. FIG. 12 is an example of a client application screen display for selecting a charging location to define a charge profile, and assigning a name to the location.

FIG. 13 shows an example of a client application screen display comprising a map showing the user's current location, and a current location of the electric vehicle. A button at the bottom of the screen display may be used to request walking directions to the vehicle. FIG. 14 is a map display showing a suggested route for walking from the user's current location to the current location of the electric vehicle. The current location of the vehicle may be obtained in various ways, for example, by querying the vehicle (from the server or the handheld client), or accessing a stop location from the last trip history database record, or a temporary data buffer. Further, a stop location can also be recorded via the portable device (with GPS) manually by the user or automatically when the vehicle is Key-Off. A button at the top of the display enables toggling to a list view of the suggested route. FIG. 15 shows the suggested walking route of FIG. 14 in a list view.

Travel Planning for EV

FIG. 16 is an example of a client application screen display for a travel planner feature. The travel planner may be used to calculate routes based on current location and taking into account the vehicle charge level. If necessary, a route may be modified in order to visit a charging station along the way. FIG. 17 shows an example of a client application screen display for adding a route point or adding a charging station for planning a trip. The display may include indications of the car's current location, charge level and estimated range. Planning a trip may involve the following display screen interactions. FIG. 18 is an example of a client application screen display for entering a place or address as part of planning a trip. FIG. 19 shows a listing of locations that were found based on the data entered in FIG. 18. In FIG. 19, the listed locations preferably are color coded, or some other indicator provided, to indicate whether the vehicle is capable of reaching the location based on current location and charge level. For example, green color may be used to indicate that the vehicle can reach the corresponding location; yellow may be used to indicate the vehicle probably can reach the location, but that is not certain; and red may be used to indicate the corresponding location is out of range. A button may be provided to switch to map view.

FIG. 20 is a map display showing the locations that are listed in the screen display of FIG. 19, enabling user selection of a desired location or route point by touching the screen at the corresponding location indicator. Preferably, the locations are color coded on the map as described with regard to FIG. 19. Referring now to FIG. 21, the user has selected a location (from the list or the map view), and the selected route point is now listed, again color coded, with an indication of the distance to that route point. The process can

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be repeated to identify and select additional route points to add to the trip. When ready, the user can press the "Calculate Route" button at the bottom to obtain a recommended route.

Charging Stations

Referring now to FIG. 22, this screen display enables conducting a search for charging stations. One may search near a current location of the EV, or the user can enter another location, street address or a specific charge station name. FIG. 23 is a continuation of the screen display of FIG. 22 which may be accessed, for example, by scrolling. The charge station search function, in a preferred embodiment, may include specification of a charging station brand, charger levels (types of chargers) and other criteria such as network stations only, free stations only, public stations, etc. The search is enabled, in some embodiments, by interaction with the server 12 of FIG. 1, acting in communication with one or more charging stations networks (30 in FIG. 1). In some examples, the server 12 provides an aggregator function across multiple brands or networks of charging stations. It may select favorites, find best pricing, or apply other criteria including but not limited to those mentioned above.

FIG. 24 is an example of a client application screen display showing a listing of charging stations identified by a search. FIG. 25 is a map display showing locations of the charging stations that are listed in the display of FIG. 24. Corresponding distances may be listed for each station. Brand names, and/or other indicia may be included as well, for example, current pricing or special promotions. As before, color coding may be used. From the list view or the map view, a user may select a charging station to visit. Details of the selected station may then be displayed as illustrated in the example of FIG. 26. Details may include charger levels, current status (availability for charging), location, hours, phone and access details, photos of the location, user reviews and comments.

FIG. 27 shows a selected charging station added to a trip plan similar to adding a route point. In an embodiment, a user can slide route points up or down on the display screen (finger slide gesture) to reorder the trip, and then it can be recalculated. FIG. 28 is an example of a client application screen display arranged for a user to enter a home address, which may be used as an anchor point or route point. FIG. 29 illustrates adding the user's home location as a route point for a trip plan. The user's home may have charging capability. In that case, it may be listed in an eco charge profile as explained above with regard to FIG. 10.

FIG. 30 is an example of a client application screen display regarding planning a proposed trip. This display may result from a "calculate route" command. It provides options to switch to map view (FIG. 32). The display may indicate the vehicle's ability to reach listed destinations based on current charge level. It may show the route details, with buttons to enable editing the route, and/or sending the route to the vehicle. FIG. 31 is a continuation from FIG. 30 showing details of the proposed route. FIG. 32 is an example of a map screen display illustrating the proposed route, with a button to toggle to list view. As noted earlier, color-coding preferably is included in map views and/or list views of locations or route points.

Referring now to FIG. 33, this illustrates a search interface for finding a charging station independently of travel planning. The charging station searching feature was described above with regard to FIGS. 22-23. FIG. 34 is a continuation of the display of FIG. 33 showing more details for a charging station search. FIG. 35 is an example of a screen display showing a listing of charging stations that

were found pursuant to the search defined in FIGS. 33-34. FIG. 36 is an illustration of the charging station search results in a map view.

Charging Station Reservations

FIG. 37 is an example of a screen display showing details of a selected charging station, as mentioned above, with an option to reserve charging time at the charging station. FIG. 47 is an example of a client application screen display for making a reservation at the selected charging station identified in FIG. 37. To do so, the user may log into a pre-established account with a username and password. A date is selected for the charging reservation, along with a charging start time and duration. FIG. 48 is a continuation of the prior screen display. The client application may indicate a price for the charging session. It may obtain this information from the charging network, or via the central server. The client app may provide for a reminder. In a presently preferred implementation, the central server implements the charging reservation feature by interaction with a charging station network, for example using an API. A "Reserve" button on the app display screen may be used to make the reservation. FIG. 49 shows an example of a screen display confirming a charging station reservation, and showing the reservation details. FIG. 50 is an example of a screen display for canceling a reservation at an EV charging station. In some cases, a penalty may be charged for canceling a reservation.

Commuting Assistance for EV

FIG. 38 is an example of a client application screen display showing an upcoming commute and a series of stored commutes, along with travel time for each commute based on traffic conditions. In case of heavy or slow traffic along the upcoming commute route, the system may recommend an alternate route or departure time. Traffic and route information may be provided via the server.

FIG. 51 is an example of a client application screen display regarding a stored commute to work, with information on travel time and an alternate route. An alternate route may be one created by the system to present the driver with a time saving option. Such alternate routes may be evaluated for energy demands and presented only if the EV has sufficient battery reserves.

FIG. 52 is an example of a map display illustrating an alternate route responsive to the button on FIG. 51, with a button to show traffic. FIG. 53 is an example of a screen display of the map of FIG. 52 including an indication of traffic conditions, for example, by using color.

FIG. 39 is an example of a client application screen display showing a health report for the electric vehicle. FIG. 40 is an example of a client application screen display showing information about a user's driving style, which preferably is based on a history of trips, and displaying information reflecting monetary savings and energy consumption for the subject vehicle. This type of report can be generated by the server using the history database described above.

FIG. 41 is an example of screen display showing aggregated information for a given group, model or fleet of electric vehicles. FIG. 42 is an example of a client application screen display for managing a user's account and other operations.

FIGS. 43-45 enable maintaining a user profile. FIG. 46 is an example of a screen display for updating a user password for a mobile application account.

FIG. 54 is an example of a web page interface for electric vehicle services. The various features illustrated in FIG. 54 were described above with regard to a smart phone user interface.

It will be obvious to those having skill in the art that many changes may be made to the details of the above-described embodiments without departing from the underlying principles of the invention. The scope of the present invention should, therefore, be determined only by the following claims.

The invention claimed is:

1. A computer-implemented method comprising the steps of:
 - providing a server computer;
 - coupling the server computer to a wireless network for wireless communications;
 - establishing a first communication session over the wireless network between the server computer and an electric vehicle (EV);
 - in the first communication session, acquiring trip data from the EV and determining a current charge level of the EV; and in the server computer:
 - analyzing the acquired trip data and comparing results of the analysis to the current charge level of the EV to estimate a range;
 - receiving and storing input data defining a proposed trip using the EV, the proposed trip comprising at least a destination location, and optionally a series of one or more route points;
 - determining a proposed route to implement the proposed trip;
 - in the case that the estimated range is not sufficient to traverse the proposed route, identifying a charging station located proximate to the proposed route;
 - proposing a modified proposed trip to include a recharging stop at the identified charging station en route to the destination location;
 - establishing a second communication session over the wireless network between the server computer and a hand-held personal portable device;
 - in the second communication session, communicating the modified proposed trip to the hand-held personal portable device; and
 - in the hand-held personal portable device, displaying the modified proposed trip.
2. The computer-implemented method of claim 1 including:
 - providing an application program executable on the hand-held personal portable device, the application program operatively coupled to a user interface of the hand-held personal portable device and configured for interaction with the server computer over the wireless network; and wherein
 - the input defining the proposed trip is entered using the user interface; and
 - the proposed modification of the proposed route is displayed on the user interface.
3. The computer-implemented method of claim 2 and wherein said identifying a charging station located generally along the proposed route includes, in the server computer, establishing a third communication session over the wireless network between the server computer and at least one charging station network to acquire current charging station information, and relaying the charging station information to the application program to display on the user interface of the hand-held personal portable device.

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4. The computer-implemented method of claim 2 and further comprising:

estimating an arrival time of day (ETA) at the identified charging station;

in the server computer, communicating a reservation request to the identified charging station to recharge the EV, beginning at the ETA;

receiving a response to the request;

based on the response, automatically updating the proposed route to include a stop for recharging the EV at the identified charging station; and

communicating the updated proposed route to the hand-held personal portable device.

5. The computer-implemented method of claim 2 including, in the server computer:

selecting a charging station, based on its location and availability;

communicating with the charging station network to make a reservation for charging at the selected charging station on behalf of a user of the EV; and

communicating the reservation information to the application program to display in the user interface.

6. The computer-implemented method of claim 2 wherein analyzing the acquired trip data includes identifying patterns in the trip data that reflect correlation of energy usage to days of the week.

7. The computer-implemented method of claim 2 wherein analyzing the acquired trip data includes identifying patterns in the trip data that reflect correlation of energy usage to topological data.

8. A non-transitory computer readable memory storing instructions executable in a processor of a hand-held personal portable device, the portable device having a user interface including a display screen, and the portable device configured for communications over a wireless network, the instructions arranged for causing the processor to:

acquire and store trip data responsive to operation of an electric vehicle (EV);

determine a current charge level of the EV;

determine a current location of the EV;

transmit the driving data and the current charge level and the current location over a wireless communication link to a remote server for range analysis;

receive estimated range data based on the analysis over a wireless communication from the remote server; and display the estimated range data on the display screen of the portable device.

9. The memory of claim 8 wherein the stored instructions further cause the processor to:

receive input defining a proposed trip for the EV, the proposed trip comprising at least a destination location, and optionally a series of one or more route points;

transmit the proposed trip over the wireless communication to the remote server for analysis relative to the estimated range data of the EV;

receive a proposed route to implement the proposed trip over the wireless communication from the remote server;

the proposed route including, in the case that the estimated range is not adequate to complete the proposed trip from the current location, a revised route that includes a recharging stop.

10. The memory of claim 9 wherein the stored instructions further cause the processor to acquire a reservation confirmation for the recharging stop from the remote server.

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11. The memory of claim 9 wherein the stored instructions further cause the processor to program the revised route into a navigation system of the EV.

12. The memory of claim 9 wherein the stored instructions implement an interactive client application for use in a smartphone.

13. The memory of claim 12 wherein the stored instructions implements a screen display indicating a readiness status of the electric vehicle.

14. The memory of claim 12 wherein the stored instructions implements a screen display including icons corresponding to a variety of available user services and features.

15. The memory of claim 12 wherein the stored instructions implements a screen display to implement user specification of drive times.

16. The memory of claim 12 wherein the stored instructions implements a screen display to implement specification of drive times by day of the week.

17. The memory of claim 12 wherein the stored instructions implements a screen display to enable adding or programming a drive time.

18. The memory of claim 12 wherein the stored instructions is executable on a head unit of the EV or on a portable client device coupled to the EV to utilize a display screen of the head unit.

19. A computer-implemented method comprising the steps of:

providing a server computer;

arranging the server computer for wireless communications with a remote client device associated with an electric vehicle (EV), the wireless communications including communications to acquire trip data from the EV and to acquire a current charge level of the EV; and in the server computer:

analyzing the acquired trip data and comparing results of the analysis to the current charge level of the vehicle to estimate a range;

reporting the estimated range to the remote client device via the wireless communications, and displaying the estimated range on a display screen of the client device.

20. The computer-implemented method of claim 19 wherein the remote client device comprises one of a group that includes a personal portable device, a vehicle head unit, and a computer.

21. The computer-implemented method of claim 19 wherein the acquired trip data includes a record for at least one trip taken by the EV, wherein the record includes a distance traveled by the electric vehicle, how much energy was used by the electric vehicle during the trip, and a time stamp indicating a date and time that the trip started and/or ended.

22. The computer-implemented method of claim 21 wherein the trip record includes at least one of a route, start and stop locations, way points, traffic data and topological data.

23. The computer-implemented method of claim 21 wherein the trip record includes at least one of weather conditions, temperature, traffic conditions and periodic speed readings.

24. The computer-implemented method of claim 21 wherein analyzing the acquired trip data to estimate a range includes taking into account current temperature at a current location of the EV.

25. The computer-implemented method of claim 21 wherein analyzing the acquired trip data to estimate a range includes taking traffic data into account.